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On the Occasion of the Visit of Chinese Ambassador Li Zhaoxing

Max S. Baucus

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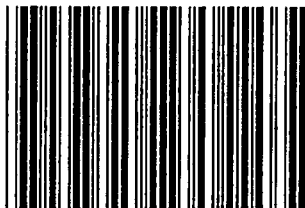
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(2) Subject* **On the Occasion of the Visit of Chinese Ambassador Li Zhaoxing**

DOCUMENT DATE*: **04/23/1999**

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BAUCUS

Remarks of Senator Max Baucus
On the Occasion of the Visit of Chinese Ambassador Li Zhaoxing
Missoula, Montana - Shadow's Keep Restaurant
Friday, April 23, 1999
7:30 p.m.

Good evening and welcome to you all. Mr. Ambassador and Madame Li -- **Huan Eng Dao, Montana** ["Hwan in dow, Montana"].

I am pleased that so many of you were able to join us tonight. This is an exciting moment – to welcome Ambassador Li Zhaoxing to our great state. And thank you to our sponsor **The Montana World Trade Center**, and my dear friend, **Arnie Sherman** for helping extend a great Big Sky Welcome to our distinguished guests.

I am delighted to see each of you here tonight because you recognize that our relationship with China is extremely important. Last year alone, despite our economic struggles, Montana exported nearly \$9 million worth of products to China. This is only the beginning. And we are moving forward in great strides.

That's why I am so pleased that we were recently able to sign an agreement with China that drops a 25 year barrier on Pacific Northwest Wheat. We hope, Mr. Ambassador, that during your visit – we will be able to convince you to agree with your own Premier Zhu Rongji, that American and especially Montana wheat tastes better! And to prove that, I'm taking you to Pasta Montana to sample the real and the best thing!

In addition to agriculture, I hope that we are able to work together to finalize China's accession package which includes benefits for everyone in this room. Whether you are involved in medicine, the timber industry, aviation, agriculture, communications, environmental technology, insurance and many more sectors, Montana will soon see the direct benefits of our relationship.

As will China. Over the last decade and a half, China has been the world's fastest growing economy, with an annual growth rate exceeding nine percent. Despite the Asian financial crisis, China continues to grow rapidly. When you add this to significant economic reform in many sectors and a continuing effort by the present leadership to convert its state-owned industries into modern, efficient operations, you get a picture of an economy that offers incredible opportunity.

But our relationship with China does not end at Montana's borders. It is important for all of us to make sure that our engagement with China is in the best interests of our country. For that reason, I would like to thank the Ambassador for coming here today to share with us China's commitment to joining the global trading system.

Open trade markets and open access to markets ensures that jobs and a stronger economy will be our reality and not just our hope.

Just two weeks ago, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji came to Washington to work out the very critical details of an accession package for China's entry into the World Trade Organization. During that visit, negotiators make historic progress toward opening up the world's largest market, establishing a trading system based on rule of law, and addressing our most sensitive intellectual property, labor and transparency concerns. I must say, that I was most pleased by the progress made; however, I was also disappointed that we were not quite able to seal the deal. However, I am confident that our US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and her Chinese counterparts will soon finalize the details of a commercially powerful trade agreement.

I have studied the agreements reached so far, and I can tell all of you that our negotiators and the Chinese negotiators did a great job in moving this along. So, one of my major tasks over the coming months is to take the lead in the Senate to ensure this agreement is approved.

And I need your help. That is another reason why I asked the Ambassador to come to Montana – to share with you the benefits of the agreement. And to see first hand, the incredible products and the incredible friends, Montana has to offer.

From the people in this room, I am confident that he will return knowing that Montana wants to engage with China. That Montana, which is also the recently established sister state of Guangshi Province, is committed to building a lasting relationship with China.

And we in Montana are fortunate to have such an experienced Ambassador to carry our goodwill back to China.

Now, I understand that my distinguished colleague, Ambassador Li Zhaoxing has led Chinese delegations to visit 101 countries in five continents. Now I would say "Congratulations!" after all this traveling you have finally found, as we call Montana, "The Last Best Place."

Mr. Ambassador and Madame Li, welcome to Montana! (Clap)...